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Chair: Mr. Mac-Donald ..... (Suriname)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

Agenda item 64: Report of the Human Rights Council (A/67/53, A/67/53/Corr.1 and A/67/53/Add.1)

1. **Ms. Dupuy-Lasserre** (President, Human Rights Council), introducing the report of the Human Rights Council (A/67/53), said that in the first year since the review of its functioning, it had addressed human rights violations through interregional coalitions and the Member States' desire to approach human rights consistently and without confrontation. Its attention had been focused on the human rights situation in the Syrian Arab Republic. In its latest resolution, of September 2012, it had decided to extend the mandate of the Commission of Inquiry on Syria and strengthen its capacity. She had therefore appointed two new members, which she hoped would result in the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) deploying more staff on the ground.

2. Apart from its resolutions on the Syrian Arab Republic, the Council had adopted various country-specific resolutions. It had followed the human rights violations in northern Mali closely. With regard to Eritrea, it had decided to transfer communications being considered under the confidential complaint procedure to the new Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Eritrea.

3. It had adopted resolutions on technical assistance for various countries, and a resolution on Sri Lanka. With regard to Libya, the Council had been active during the 2011 crisis and would support the authorities with a view to a successful transition. In March 2012 it had established the International Fact-finding Mission on Israeli Settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, whose report it would consider at its March 2013 session. The implementation of those measures, however, would depend on additional resources, which she hoped would be approved by the General Assembly.

4. The first high-level panel on human rights mainstreaming, in February 2012, had brought together senior United Nations agency staff to address human rights, development and cooperation. The next such panel, on the development agenda beyond 2015 with a focus on education, would take place in February 2013. It would be a chance to assess progress in human rights mainstreaming in the light of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and provide input to the Secretary-General's High-level Panel of Eminent Persons and the 2013 General Assembly special event.

5. At the Council's twenty-second session early in 2013, panel and thematic discussions would be organized on corruption, the employment of persons with disabilities, the rights of the child and health, and technical cooperation to strengthen the justice system. The twenty-first anniversary of the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action would be commemorated.

6. The Council had established new special procedures mandates, including the Special Rapporteurs on the situation of human rights in Belarus and in Eritrea and the Independent Expert on the issue of human rights obligations related to the enjoyment of a safe, clean, healthy and sustainable environment. For the first time, it had heard the reports of the Special Rapporteur on the promotion of truth, justice, reparation and guarantees of non-recurrence, the Independent Expert on the promotion of a democratic and equitable international order, the Working Group on the issue of human rights and transnational corporations and other business enterprises, and the Working Group on discrimination against women in law and in practice. It had established open-ended intergovernmental working groups to consider draft declarations on the right to peace and the rights of peasants and other people working in rural areas.

7. The many panels meant that the Council had a heavy workload. It had adopted 99 resolutions, decisions and President's statements in 2012. It had established interregional initiatives on the safety of journalists, companies and human rights, corruption, and human rights and the environment, and had undertaken more coordinated work on country-specific questions. It had addressed freedom of expression and assembly, and had adopted resolutions on the safety of journalists, peaceful protest and human rights on the Internet. It had examined the right to development, extreme poverty, the right to food, maternal mortality, the enjoyment of cultural rights, and the rights of vulnerable groups.

8. The March 2012 resolution on freedom of religion had emphasized that freedom of religion and freedom of expression were interdependent. The Council had held a debate on freedom of expression and incitement to hatred in June 2012, as a follow-up to its resolution 16/18 of March 2011 on religious intolerance.

9. The number of delegates at the high-level segment was increasing, showing the increasing interest in the Council's work. More civil society representatives were attending Council events, with an average of 200 non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and 100 events at each session.

10. As a result of the 2011 Council review, national human rights institutions complying with the Paris Principles and local NGOs accredited by NGOs in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) could now participate in the Council's work through video messages.

11. The participation of civil society was fundamental to the Council's work and made it unique. However, frequent allegations of intimidation, arbitrary detention and torture of people who had cooperated with the United Nations had been received. She condemned such reprisals, and thanked the Secretary-General for his report (A/HRC/21/18) and for sending a clear message during his September 2012 address to the Council.

12. She drew attention to Chapter II of the Council's annual report (A/67/53) and the annex thereto, in which resolutions containing recommendations to the General Assembly were listed. In resolution 19/18 the Council recommended that the General Assembly should consider launching an urgent discussion on the legality of certain munitions. In resolution 20/14 it recommended that the General Assembly should study the participation in the Assembly of national human rights institutions complying with the Paris Principles. In resolution 21/6 it asked the Secretary-General to send the General Assembly the technical guidance on a human-rights-based approach to maternal mortality and morbidity. In resolution 21/11 it decided to send the guiding principles on extreme poverty and human rights to the General Assembly. In resolution 21/24 it noted with appreciation the Secretary-General's report on the participation of indigenous peoples' representatives in the United Nations and invited the General Assembly to include the matter in its agenda. In resolution 21/33 it decided to send the General Assembly the draft Programme of Action for the Decade for People of African Descent with a view to its adoption. Chapter II of the annual report contained a resolution on the geographical balance of the staff of OHCHR.

13. Since the success of the first cycle of the universal periodic review, it had been perceived as valuable for national dialogue. The second cycle, in which the implementation of the recommendations and the future challenges were being studied, would be crucial to the consolidation of the review. The gains of the first cycle should be preserved, in particular the 100 per cent rate of report presentation by the high-level delegations. She urged Member States to support the review and ensure that it remained comprehensive.

14. She thanked Member States which had helped delegations from countries which were far from Geneva or had no Permanent Mission there to attend Council meetings, and also Member States which had helped prepare national reports. The Council had established the Voluntary Technical Assistance Trust Fund to Support the Participation of Least Developed Countries and Small Island Developing States, which would provide training and capacity-building and complement existing trust funds.

15. A task force had been established to follow up on the Council review. While most of its recommendations would not require additional resources, conference services at the United Nations Office at Geneva should be improved and regular budgetary funds were needed for the Council webcast, which was the only official record of its meetings since there were no more resources for summary records.

16. Although the many resolutions approved by the Council and the increasing number of new mandates requiring OHCHR support called for considerable resources, the OHCHR share of the regular budget had not increased sufficiently and it was forced to rely on voluntary contributions. It received only 3 per cent of the regular budget, even though human rights were one of the three pillars of the United Nations. The General Assembly should allocate appropriate resources and take action to ensure that OHCHR was substantially funded from the regular budget, thus guaranteeing its independence and allowing it to address needs on the ground. She urged those present to work with their Fifth Committee counterparts to meet the challenge.

17. **Ms. Loew** (Switzerland) said that her delegation welcomed the intensification of the work of the Human Rights Council, and urged all States to continue cooperating fully with the universal periodic review mechanism. It would like to know more about the decisive elements that would determine the success of

the Council's second cycle, and wondered how the universal periodic review and treaty bodies served to strengthen each other. Switzerland supported the adoption of country-specific resolutions and the introduction of new themes in the Council's work, and called on Member States to maintain their voluntary contributions. She sought further information on the specific steps that could be taken to strengthen allocations from the regular budget for human rights activities.

18. **Mr. Camp** (United States of America) said that his country welcomed the adoption of resolutions on the most pressing country-specific and thematic human rights issues, and had strived to keep the spotlight on the world's worst human rights violators, build States' human rights capacities and support civil society. Given the deteriorating situation in the Syrian Arab Republic, the Commission of Inquiry should continue to investigate alleged violations of international human rights law there. On the other hand, the disproportionate focus on Israel diminished the Council's credibility and effectiveness; the United States strongly opposed the permanent agenda item devoted to Israel. His delegation would like to know what thematic issues the Council would focus on in the coming year, and what steps could be taken to make the universal periodic review as effective as possible, including changes that might need to be made during the second cycle.

19. **Ms. Schlyter** (Observer for the European Union) said that the European Union had always been a strong supporter of the Human Rights Council and wished to see a credible, effective body that was able to address and prevent human rights violations in real time. The European Union would like further information on the role the Council should play in ensuring implementation of recommendations by States under review, and on steps that could be taken to strengthen the links between the Third Committee and the Council. It also asked about ways to enhance the Council's visibility.

20. **Mr. Sparber** (Liechtenstein) said that, at the current crucial stage of the universal periodic review, his country was concerned that its universal nature might be at risk, a fear recently confirmed by the High Commissioner for Human Rights. It therefore wondered what steps had been or would be taken to preserve the integrity of that process.

21. **Ms. Li** Xiaomei (China) said that the Council had played a significant role in promoting human rights around the world, and the universal periodic review had already become a platform for constructive dialogue and cooperation between countries. However, her country was concerned about the rising trend towards politicization, the inadequate attention paid to economic, social and cultural rights and the right to development, and the failure of some of the special mechanisms to abide by their terms of reference. It urged Member States to refrain from interfering in China's internal affairs, and to respect the principles of impartiality, objectivity and non-selectivity. They should adopt a more balanced approach to the two categories of human rights, ensure that they had the consent of the countries concerned, and provide developing countries with technical assistance and support in capacity building. China had actively participated in the Council's work and was preparing for the next cycle of the review. However, it was concerned that the General Assembly plenary had considered the Council's report before it had been considered by the Third Committee, since the Committee was the primary body responsible for human rights.

22. **Ms. Alsaleh** (Syrian Arab Republic) said that her country was committed to working with the Council to promote human rights in an equitable and just manner. First, she wondered whether the adoption of country-specific resolutions contradicted the principles of the universal periodic review, which gave all Member States the opportunity to address human rights issues and obtain the Council's recommendations. Second, her delegation would like to know what mechanisms could be deployed to tackle human rights violations in countries claiming to be developed countries, including discrimination against foreigners, indigenous peoples, refugees and prisoners. Third, it would welcome further information on the measures the Council had adopted to deal with violations of the right to development and the imposition of illegal economic sanctions against developing countries in an effort to exert political pressure on those countries and bring about a change in their political regimes.

23. **Mr. Amorós Núñez** (Cuba) said that the negative practices that had discredited the Commission on Human Rights should not exist in the Council, and his country was deeply concerned at the current trend towards selectivity and double standards in the

consideration of human rights situations. While the developed countries had pushed the adoption of country-specific resolutions and costly fact-finding missions in order to promote their own interests, the resolutions promoted by developing countries — especially those concerning economic, social and cultural rights — were met with obstacles and arguments revolving around a lack of resources. The work of the Council should be based on cooperation and respectful dialogue, and his country would welcome the President's views on steps that could be taken to create an environment conducive to cooperation. Secondly, it wondered how the right to development could take its rightful place in the Council's activities and, more broadly, in those of the human rights machinery.

24. **Ms. Haruki** (Japan) said that her country would do its utmost to fulfil its responsibilities as a member of the Council for the 2013-2015 term. In the meantime, it would welcome guidance on how Member States could make the best use of the second cycle of reviews. In addition, Japan welcomed the adoption of country-specific resolutions and asked for further information on the progress that had been made in that area.

25. **Mr. Saadi** (Algeria) said that the universal periodic review was the most effective tool for avoiding confrontation and promoting dialogue. His country had submitted its second report in 2012 and accepted most of the recommendations, and had made a financial contribution to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to provide technical assistance to the least developed countries. It had also presented its candidacy for the Council's 2014-2016 term. Given that special mandates were sometimes connected or even identical, he wondered whether a reduction in the number of mandates could be considered to avoid duplication, especially in view of current budgetary constraints.

26. **Mr. De Léon Huerta** (Mexico) asked for further information on the steps that would be taken to make the Council more accessible to persons with disabilities, and whether those steps would involve discussions with the United Nations Office in Geneva.

27. **Ms. Dupuy Lasserre** (President of the Human Rights Council) said that a Council task force was working with the Office of the High Commissioner and the United Nations Office at Geneva to provide security, documentation and information for persons with disabilities. The Council had published a report containing practical recommendations such as the creation of a focal point in Geneva and the publication of official documents in Braille, most of which did not require substantial resources and could easily be implemented. Greater efforts should be made by the administration, since persons with disabilities should not be denied the opportunity to participate.

28. The presentation of the Council's report to the General Assembly plenary increased the visibility of its work, and its initial consideration in that forum did not prevent States from engaging in dialogue and adopting resolutions in the Third Committee. With regard to cooperation, an increasing number of countries had extended open invitations to the special procedures, but many countries still refused to cooperate at even the most basic level. Goodwill on all sides was required. It was important for the universal human rights system to be viewed as an instrument that could help States and not as one that would interfere in their internal affairs, especially since it was ultimately the State under review that decided whether to accept the recommendations made. If a State refused to accept some or all of the recommendations, the hope was that they would at least generate national discussion.

29. Given that the second cycle of the universal periodic review had begun, no substantive changes could be introduced. However, countries were encouraged to respond promptly to the recommendations, and to remember that the review was a non-selective process. The Council had improved its working methods and was increasingly working on the basis of consensus and prior consultations, but it remained an intergovernmental body governed by certain political considerations. Consensus could not realistically be reached on every occasion.

30. Numerous stakeholders could help States to implement the recommendations besides the Council and the mandate holders. The High Commissioner could provide technical cooperation, while resident coordinators could facilitate contact with donors when countries needed additional financial assistance. However, as part of the efforts to mainstream the human rights perspective into the United Nations system, the system as a whole should assist any country that needed support. Under the "One United Nations" initiative country assistance should be

coordinated in a manner that avoided duplication of effort in a time of scarce resources.

31. Over the coming year the Council would focus on democracy and the rule of law, and the link between the rule of law and human rights, as well as activities to commemorate the anniversary of the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action. It would work with the United Nations Development Programme and other partners to promote the right to development, and to incorporate the human rights perspective into the work of the United Nations beyond 2015. Lastly, discrimination against women remained a major problem in some countries, and more attention should be paid to that issue, especially given that women's rights, poverty and national development were all interrelated.

32. **Ms. Malefane** (South Africa) said that funding for new mandates merited special attention, and her country therefore welcomed the opportunity to present its views on the United Nations human rights programme for 2014-2015, and hoped to see continued open, transparent and inclusive dialogue between all stakeholders. It also welcomed the adoption of the Guiding Principles on Extreme Poverty and Human Rights, and looked forward to continuing its collaboration with the Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights through the University of the Western Cape. The resolution adopted by the Council on the promotion and protection of the human rights of peasants and other people working in rural areas was an important step forward in recognizing the human rights of a group of people who suffered disproportionately from poverty, underdevelopment and hunger.

33. On the subject of mercenaries and the right of peoples to self-determination, South Africa commended the steps taken towards developing an international regulatory framework on the regulation, monitoring and oversight of the activities of private military and security companies, and supported the establishment of a legally binding instrument. Her country was working to combat racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance in accordance with the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action, and welcomed the adoption of Council resolution 21/33 on that subject, as well as the work of the Working Group of Experts on People of African Descent. Lastly, the Government had submitted its second report under the universal periodic review, and looked forward to receiving the Council's recommendations.

34. **Mr. Selim** (Egypt) said that the adoption of the results of the Council's review by a vote had undermined the aim of ensuring universal support for its work. The Council should respect the principles of sovereignty and non-interference in domestic affairs, in order to avoid the politicization, selectivity and double standards which had hindered the Commission on Human Rights.

35. The Council's annual report reaffirmed its importance in national capacity-building, global human rights monitoring and the promotion of economic, social, cultural, civil and political rights. It had protected the rights of the Palestinian people and had strengthened the international community's efforts to combat racism. Its early efforts to apply the principles of understanding, cooperation and transparency and avoid confrontation, selectivity and politicization were weakening, however. To avoid the mistakes of the past, a number of challenges should be addressed: the politicization of resolutions; the enforcement of controversial notions such as sexual orientation and gender identity without international consensus; the suspension by one Member State of its relations with the Council on the pretext that the Council's work was discriminatory, undermining the Council's credibility; and systematic attempts to use the Council to legitimize Security Council interference in human rights situations worldwide.

36. The international community should ensure that the Council carried out its functions transparently and cooperatively and did not become a tool for enforcing the human rights trusteeship of a few countries or for controversial notions with no grounding in international human rights law, showing no regard for the diverse values of Member States. It should ensure the cooperation of Member States with the Council's fact-finding missions and missions of inquiry, and the implementation of their recommendations, to reinforce the Council's credibility and avoid double standards.

37. **Mr. Mamat** (Malaysia) said that the Council was breaking new ground in capacity-building and technical assistance, and was moving towards deeper discussions by exploring the links between human rights, democracy and the rule of law.

38. His delegation supported the initiative to make OHCHR funding more transparent, and welcomed the

measures for the allocation of adequate resources to the Council. However, it objected to attempts to reinterpret the agreed working methods; in 2012, the Council Bureau had addressed substantive matters lying outside its mandate. The role of the Presidency and Bureau had been defined in the institution-building package, and the Bureau had no prerogative to take a position on substantive questions. Doing so would establish a precedent which could negatively affect the Council's work.

39. **Mr. Elbahi** (Sudan) said that his Government had presented its first national report as part of the universal periodic review in 2011 and had established a national commission to implement the resulting recommendations. The Council's decision at its twenty-first session to renew the mandate of the Independent Expert on the situation of human rights in the Sudan constituted recognition of the improvements in that area and highlighted his Government's efforts to champion such rights.

40. Although the independent human rights commission in the Sudan had been established only months earlier, it had already issued an action plan. A special tribunal for Darfur and a post of special prosecutor had been created, and the tripartite initiative on human rights in Blue Nile and South Kordofan states had been accepted. His Government was working with its three partners to bring stability in those states, and had helped them to expand their agriculture and the Roseires dam. The United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA) had been deployed.

41. His delegation requested an increase in Council resources so that the High Commissioner could show the same interest in economic, social and cultural rights as in civil and political rights. The right to freedom of expression should not be used to defame religion, and concepts which were not universally recognized should not be accepted.

42. **Mr. Lazarev** (Belarus) said that his country had reviewed the Human Rights Council report, and had noted the results of the mutually respectful dialogue engaged in by Governments during the universal periodic review. He reiterated the assessment of the review as a balanced cooperation mechanism based on objective and reliable information, and as a process which took into account the interests and priorities of participating Governments while striving for practical results with respect to the protection of human rights.

43. His country had implemented nearly 80 per cent of the recommendations made in the report and it would continue its efforts through the next review in 2015. At the same time, it was unacceptable that the mechanism should be subject to a double standard in the interests of specific groups of countries.

44. There was an alarming tendency to politicize the approach to country assessments, a situation which had at one time served as the shameful pretext for the dissolution of the Commission on Human Rights. His country was deeply concerned by the practice of voting for country resolutions, and by their use as instruments to exert political pressure in contravention of the principles of universality, objectivity and impartiality. Country resolutions should not replace the universal periodic review, especially when countries had made great efforts to fulfil its recommendations. Regrettably, the Council's work likewise neglected to observe a balance between civil and political rights, and economic, social and cultural rights.

45. **Mr. Errázuriz** (Chile) said that the fact that 70 percent of the Council's resolutions had been adopted by consensus had shown the interest of States in seeking agreement to achieve their goals. His delegation welcomed the thematic resolution on good governance in human rights promotion (A/HRC/RES/19/20) and the appointment of two new Rapporteurs for addressing serious and urgent situations. A special session had been held on the Syrian Arab Republic, where the situation had tested the international community's ability to tackle serious human rights violations.

46. His delegation welcomed the end of the first cycle of the universal periodic review, and hoped that the resulting recommendations would be followed up in the second cycle. It was concerned, however, that minority groups might react violently to the incitement of religious hatred, and therefore welcomed resolution 16/18 on combating religious intolerance. Dialogue and international human rights instruments were the right way to deal with the tension between freedom of expression and freedom of religion.

47. His delegation was concerned by the financial situation of the Council and OHCHR, which would become unsustainable without more regular budget funds. Pending lasting solutions, States should be cautious when requesting new mandates, reports or panels. It was inconsistent to decry the system's

financial situation when the resolutions approved during the preceding Council session had cost $4 million.

48. Civil society and NGOs were essential to the improvement of the human rights situation. His delegation welcomed the involvement of NGOs in the negotiations on Council resolutions, condemned acts of aggression against their representatives, and welcomed the steps taken to prevent such acts.

49. **Mr. Achgalou** (Morocco) said that the modern world was in rapid flux, from democratic revolutions to climate change and economic, humanitarian and security crises, complicated by individual acts of incitement to hatred. Many hopes thus rested on the Council's implementation of its mandate to promote human rights without politicization. A vigilant approach which took the victims into account was needed.

50. Past experience had shown that the Council's actions were determined not by regional groups or individual States but by all States collectively. The Council had enabled the international community to respond unequivocally to crises such as that in Libya. Resolution 16/18 on combating religious intolerance was the perfect expression of the States' ability to bridge historical divides and forge compromises.

51. The Council was essential to the coordination of efforts to establish a human rights system based on openness, justice, equality, equity, human dignity, cultural diversity and universal rights. To maintain its momentum, it should remain decisive and be ready to reject racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia, intolerance and hatred. Common action and the clear denunciation of small groups whose behaviour could harm human rights were thus needed. The Council should ensure that recent events did not damage the bonds between States and other concerned parties. Failure to reject intolerance could result in more human rights violations or loss of life. Lack of vigilance would allow hatred to develop.

52. Given the importance of human rights in international relations, his delegation asked why the Council was often viewed negatively or ignored. Despite its prompt and effective action, there was a sense that it was not at the centre of events. Media references to it were rare and vague. It was therefore time for it to adopt a communication strategy reflecting its awareness-raising work.

53. The rationalization of the Council's mechanisms and the creation of new mandates were essential. Attention should be paid to the capacity of OHCHR, which the Council often asked to act through its resolutions. The universal periodic review perfectly reflected the Council's depoliticization, since all Member States were subject to it without discrimination and received equal treatment. Morocco had undergone the review in May 2012 and had accepted almost all of its recommendations. It had volunteered to produce a mid-term progress report and had established a national programme to follow up on the recommendations.

54. **Mr. Adnan** (Indonesia) said that the universal periodic review had made the Council unique and more prominent than the Commission on Human Rights. His Government welcomed the support it had received at the thirteenth session of the Universal Periodic Review Working Group in May 2012. It had accepted 144 of the 180 recommendations; the remaining 36 were the subject of consultation in Indonesia, where the review had caught the public's attention, a sign of their hope that it would advance national human rights efforts.

55. Special procedures mandate holders should remain professional in their work by building trust with States. Indonesian democracy was maturing, and by working together with the Council his Government hoped to make progress in the promotion of human rights.

56. The situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory remained a focus of the international community's attention. His delegation was concerned by the continuing human rights violations and underlined its support for the Palestinian struggle. It called on Israel to implement the recommendations of numerous United Nations resolutions so that justice could be achieved.

57. **Mr. Diallo** (Senegal) said that, in an international context of unprecedented human rights violations, the discussion on the Council's report should lead to consideration of the causes of armed conflict, violations of the right to life and freedom of religion, religious defamation and racial discrimination.

58. His delegation welcomed the many resolutions adopted by the Council and its completion of the first cycle of the universal periodic review, which the international community should now refine through harmonization with the human rights treaty bodies.

During the intergovernmental process for the strengthening of those bodies, the efficient monitoring of the implementation of Member State commitments should be ensured. At the same time, the Council's actions should become more objective in line with the principle that human rights were universal, indivisible, interrelated and interdependent.

59. His Government was committed to better monitoring of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and intolerance, which had re-emerged following the financial crisis. Any improvement in the situation of migrants would depend on the ratification by destination and transit countries of the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families.

60. The Council should make the right to development and the associated economic, social and cultural rights a high priority. The achievement of the Millennium Development Goals depended on respect for those rights, particularly in developing countries.

61. The international community's attention had been drawn in summer 2012 to the tension between religious defamation and freedom of expression. His delegation invited the Member States, NGOs, universities, the private sector and the world of sport to become more involved in the promotion of dialogue among civilizations, education, peace and religious tolerance.

62. The many resolutions on the Palestinian question made it clear that Israel was repeatedly violating the Fourth Geneva Convention. The Swiss Government should convene the Conference of High Contracting Parties to that Convention to ensure that it was applied in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. Israel should continue cooperating with the Council and respect the Palestinian people's right to self-determination.

63. **Mr. Kvas** (Ukraine) said that the Council had proved its ability to respond to gross human rights violations, speak with one voice and send out resounding messages to the international community. His delegation commended the Council's closer cooperation with OHCHR, but emphasized that OHCHR should remain independent. The treaty body strengthening process had highlighted their multi-stakeholder nature, which was essential to the enhancement of their working methods. Preventive measures were fundamental to the promotion of human rights and the avoidance of violations.

64. His Government was committed to the universal periodic review, and urged all Member States to honour their commitments to it and introduce national human rights standards. His delegation acknowledged that the special procedures were one of the most dynamic human rights protection mechanisms, and, in relation to the review of the Council, welcomed the additional transparency in the selection of mandate holders and the ensuring of their independence, in particular through the possibility for national human rights institutions compliant with the Paris Principles to nominate candidates. In order to implement the Council review recommendations, his delegation urged States to cooperate with the special procedures, honour standing invitations and commit to voluntary reporting on the implementation of universal periodic review recommendations.

65. His Government was a candidate for the Council's 2018-2020 term. It was determined to engage with the Council's work constructively and, as a member, would ensure that the Council fulfilled its mandate.

The meeting rose at 5.30 p.m.